WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. III.] FEBRUARY, 1887. [No. 2.

THE EVANGELISTIC MOVEMENT IN PHILADELPHIA.

An extraordinary movement is now being made in this city to press upon the attention of all classes of its people the subject of personal salvation. Special services have been arranged in a large number of churches, and a system of house-to-house visitation organized. The circular issued by the Central Committee states that "doctrinal differences on non-essentials have been put in abeyance that we all may be one in work, as we are in spirit. The evangelical denominations of the city, almost without exception, are represented in the work, and about four hundred congregations. Such a movement has not been known before in the history of our city."

We most heartily wish, as a result of these efforts, that a very large number may be brought to share in the blessings of Christ's salvation.

But the sanguine hopes of the promoters of this enterprise will not be realized. We believe, indeed, that they have been prompted by good motives, and that the movement is of God in the sense that He will teach His people important lessons by it, and that He will be glorified in the issue. We believe, too, that He will show His grace in numerous conversions. But He cannot greatly honor this union effort because it has not gone

down to the bottom of things. It is not built upon a rock. It did not begin in the right way. To illustrate what we mean. Upon the Central Committee that arranged these services there are men who cannot invite their brethren upon it into their pulpits, nor sit down with them at the table of the Lord, one chief object of which is to teach us that we are one body in Him. On all the mission fields on the outskirts of the city there are little churches of these various denominations struggling to be foremost in the possession of the field. This union spirit is for special seasons. But the denominational spirit abides among these four hundred congregations. The interests of the particular church or denomination are put in selfish prominence above the interests of the whole body. We do not write these things in a carping spirit. We have no word of disrespect for any of the brethren engaged in this movement. We heartily approve of any effort that draws Christians of different names to work together for our common Lord. We rejoice in the many evidences afforded in these days that His Spirit is working strongly among them in this direction. Moreover, we believe that any strong movement upon the world's camp by the church must be made in concert. The Lord has plainly told us that it is only as we become one, that the world will believe. And He is leading his divided church to see this as never before.

But there is only one way by which this union and strength can be attained. There must be a far deeper recognition, than this evangelistic movement has reached, of the essential oneness in life and faith of all who are in Christ, and that they are bound to act as members one of

another. This would have led the ministers of Christ in this city first to meet together for humiliation and confession before their one Lord, of the sins and ignorances that have wrought this alienation and strife. It would have led to earnest prayer that He, by His Spirit, given for that end, would guide His church out of this confusion, revealing to her the truth about the things in which we differ, and leading her on to that unity of the faith through which alone she can come to the measure of the stature of his fullness. Some day this divided church has got to learn that division is radical weakness, that God will not bestow the plentitude of His Spirit—His gift to the whole body—upon competing factions. A broken vessel cannot contain nor impart to men life from God in its fullness. The Lord will not bestow much honor or success upon a church that will not confess the sin and shame and carnality of her rivalries, and that is not seeking to remove them. Therefore, we say, this evangelistic movement has not gone down to the bottom of the case. The church must grapple first with this crying sin of division, before it can fight the evil of the world. The world will continue the taunt, "Physician, heal thyself." And the Lord will not come to her aid, nor fill her powerfully with His presence and Spirit. A shattered temple is no fit place for His abode. If the churches of Philadelphia would but come together on the basis of this common confession, and unite their prayers fervently before God for such light and wisdom from the Holy Ghost as would lead them out of this distraction into unity, there would be such another baptism as first came upon the disciples when they were

with one accord in one place. They would soon shake this city to its foundations. The towering evils before which they stand now bewildered and almost powerless would fall before them.

The great trouble and weakness of the church now is that God, the Holy Ghost, is quenched in her. He does not go up with her against the enemy. Nor will he, so long as she harbors this great sin of divided ranks in the one army of the living God. We have had enough of banners bearing the name of Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley. We have but one Lord over us, and His name must be one. Is Christ divided? Were we baptised into either of these names? So long as we suffer ourselves to be led by them, Paul teaches us that we must remain babes in Christ, carnal, among whom there must spring up envying, and strife, and divisions, making us to "walk as men;" so that other men will only count us as like themselves, and refuse to believe in a gospel that does not lift us above their level.

PRAYER.—*O Almighty God, who didst call out Thy Church to be one holy body, filled with thy divine presence and life, and instructed in Thine eternal truth; Bless, we beseech Thee, the whole congregation of Thy people. Lead them out of their wanderings and divisions, and heal all mutual hatred, variance, and animosities, that they may all be one in Jesus Christ, as He is one with Thee. Endow it once more with the manifold gifts of the Spirit, and prepare it as the Bride of Christ against the day of His appearing. So shall we with one heart and mouth evermore praise Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

PERSONAL SALVATION.

It is commonly supposed that a doctrine which holds out a hope for any class of mankind beyond the grave, except they be believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, must work disastrously upon both preachers and hearers of the gospel in removing the sense of present peril, and of the imperative need of immediate salvation. The effect of that view, fast coming into vogue, of a probation during a so-called intermediate state before the judgment must be in this direction. If such a probation be demanded even for the heathen, the common sense of most people will suggest that there are many in Christian lands who are virtually heathen, and that a merciful Father will also see that a fairer chance be given them than they have had in this world.

And yet on the other hand there is an almost universal revolt throughout the bounds of the Christian church against the old doctrine of an eternal hell, as a misrepresentation of the character and purposes of God, as they are revealed in the Scriptures, and in the consciousness of enlightened Christians.

These differing aspects of the case are harmonized when one comes to perceive the place and meaning of resurrection in the divine economy. We then see that there is a door of hope in the distant future for multitudes of men who die out of this world unsaved, but that it is only opened in this way, through their recovery from death after the wages of sin have been fully exacted of them. And even then resurrection introduces them,

not to eternal life, but to a life which is still under trial and judgment.

Now it is for escape from this fearful suffering and loss through which sinful men must pass before resurrection, and from the hazards that follow it that the gospel offer comes to them. If we would come to see that all our Saviour's words about hell and eternal fire apply to this immediate danger, we would realize something of the magnitnde of that destruction which overhangs wicked men, and which Jesus describes under the terms, "unquenchable fire," the "worm that dieth not," the "destruction of soul and body in hell." By locating all these terms beyond a far distant day of resurrection and of judgment, we have robbed them of their force. And practically they have well nigh dropped out of modern preaching, because the Spirit of Christ within us protests against our receiving or enforcing them as descriptive of the unchanging attitude of God toward His creatures through endless ages. But our view enables us to recover these expressions for use in preaching, and to wield them with tremendous power over the minds and consciences of men. For they describe a destruction of man's present endowment of life, and of his present physical frame, whose first fruits are apparent before our eyes. They describe that abyss into which the outraged laws of Nature, which are a form of the law of God, are continually thrusting all forms of degraded life. They show that men are now walking on the edge of this fearful pit. They tell how in it, beyond the death of the body, the soul may be racked with torments and finally destroyed. And so preparation is made for the gospel message,

which tells how God has stooped down to us in Christ to forgive our sins and to save our lives from destruction. The salvation of the soul, or life, becomes from this point of view the one thing needful, the infinite blessing, to secure which a man had better forsake all things that he hath.

We see also that, whatever deliverance from this pit of hell resurrection may hereafter bring to a lost spirit, it cannot repair the loss of this present boon of life. That is gone forever. Another gift of life may be conferred, but the gift which now is so dear to us becomes hopelessly bankrupt, unless saved through Christ. Hence some of our Lord's words about it seem to imply the sinner's loss of personal being. He says, "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away," or as the New Version puts it, "lose or forfeit his own self" (Luke, ix. 25). If such a lost one recovers personal identity at the resurrection, there must be at least the loss of all personal assets.

We see then that the present salvation set before us in the gospel is a *personal* salvation, and that the opportunity of this life, once lost, is lost forever. All this can be held without denying the "hope toward God" implied in the provision to raise the dead. In this view the warning messages of Jesus can be more faithfully adhered to and applied than under the old distorted, unscriptural view of hell, which modern preaching no longer dares to be faithful to, because it instinctively feels that it misrepresents the character and purposes of God. And yet we need a true doctrine of hell. It is one of the Spirit's

mighty instruments for convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. We have gone about among the churches of this city for some time past. We have heard a large number of its preachers of different names. We have never heard one preach the old doctrine of hell, nor indeed any doctrine of it that was faithful to the words of Scripture. And therefore our doctrine of it, which locates it in its right place, as a fearful suffering of loss in death and before resurrection, and which preserves to resurrection its proper character of hope, is the very one needed for the times. For, in liberating our preachers from the awful incubus of the old dogma of endless torment, it would give them also a just and salutary view of the present danger which lies before sinful men, and unloose their tongues to speak to men about hell in a way that they need to be told about it, and which preserves to the words of Jesus their true meaning and terrible import.

Salvation of the Body.—In the words of Jesus, Matt. v. 29, 30, the salvation of the person is again brought to view. We are urged to sacrifice the eye of lust, or an offending right hand, on this ground: "For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." These words imply that there may be such a thing as a present salvation of the body, in whole or in part, from hell. In Luke ix. 25, this rescue is spoken of as the salvation, or non-forfeiture, of one's self. Now, if men had not imposed upon these passages the idea that

our Lord was referring to the casting of the risen body of the sinner into hell after a final judgment, we should see that man's present embodied life is the thing in view, as in peril of being lost, that it must be so lost, if its members of sin are not mortified; but that where the flesh is thus crucified, with its affections and lusts, something of the body is saved. "Thy whole body is not cast into hell." Other passages teach us that that it is the *soul* (ψυχή) which is saved (Mark viii. 35–37, etc.). This confirms what we have frequently taught in these pages that the "soul" of man, as distinct from "spirit," pertains to personal embodiment, that the distinctive blessing promised to the righteous is that he shall save his soul alive in the crisis of death, while other men lose their souls. The righteous therefore are not completely disembodied or unclothed between death and resurrection. While the wicked suffer the loss of both body and soul in hell, leaving their spirits naked and outcast, and imprisoned in the darkness of sheol, until the voice of the Son of God bids them come forth in resurrection.

A Second Chance.—It is manifest that for this salvation tnere is no second chance after death. Scripture gives no warrant for it, and, from the nature of the case, it is impossible. The essential difference between the two classes is that the one save their souls, or lives. They "never die." They "pass out of death into life. (Jno. v. 24). The other, lose their lives. They are death's captives. They perish. There are intimations indeed in Scripture that spirits in prison may become pris-

oners of hope (1 Peter, iii. 19). We are not forced to believe that, in the land of their captivity, they are beyond the corrective discipline and care of God. Leviticus xxvi. 38–45, and other Old Testament Scriptures, which imply that the ultimate captivity spoken of is captivity to death, give us suggestive and comforting hints on that point. But the only probation possible to such captives is a probation for resurrection. The grace of God has provided to recover them to another standing in life, as it often restored Israel to his own land. But such restoration was not confirmed salvation to Israel.—And resurrection only rehabilitates the unjust in the life and estate of manhood. This must bring to them "another chance," not to recover what once they lost, and lost forever, but such opportunities as inhere in the fact of life restored, and under such burdens and limitations, and perils of a second death, as are required by the harvest law that every one must receive in body according to the things he did.

"MILLENIAL DAWN."

Snch is the title of a book sent to us from the office of "Zion's Watchtower," published at Pittsburg, Pa., and of which the editor of that paper, Mr. Chas. T. Russell, is the author. We have read this book with great interest. We cannot advise that it be put in the hands of all classes of Christians. But intelligent and discriminating believers will find that it leads them, not only into new pastures, but on to high summits from which they obtain broad views of God's great plan of the world and of its

redemption, and of their own relation thereto. The readers of this magazine would find many of the things to which we have testified, set forth in this volume with wonderful freshness and power. We are therefore strongly in sympathy with Mr. Russell at many points in his teaching. We recognize in him a brother who, refusing the trammels which men impose, has surrendered himself to be guided and taught of the Spirit, and to whom the promise has been verified, "He will show you things to come." There is a grasp of the meaning of Scripture, there is a setting of its truths into such new relations, that they seem illumined with a new light. This book must be refreshing and invigorating to many who have been long fed on traditional interpretations which assume that God has nothing more to teach men out of His Holy Word in these last times.

And yet this very freedom from denominational trammels has betrayed the author into some serious faults, which we are compelled to notice.

1. We do not object to a man's having positive convictions of the truth of what he teaches, nor even to some dogmatic certainty of statement where he is sure that he is right. But the candid and spiritually enlightened mind will yet be humbled by the conviction that the best of us as yet know only in part and prophesy in part. It will also recognize the fact that, as the promise of the Spirit was given to the whole church, and as the one church is still far from unity, it is too much to expect that the views of truth, especially in the domain of prophecy, to which the most gifted can attain will be anything more than partial. We have each to bear some

part of the burden of ignorance which weighs down the whole body in its present divided state. And therefore a less positive air becomes us than this writer often assumes. Those who affirm that it is the plain duty of every especially enlightened Christian to come out at once from all existing church systems, are in special danger at this point.

2. We have only room to specify one or two points at which, as it seems to us, this over-confidence has betrayed Mr. Russell into error. The most serious defect, —because it pertains to a matter which is fundamental— is his virtual denial of the manhood of our Risen Lord. This especially comes out in the tenth chapter. The author is strongly impressed with the distinction between the calling of the church, the bride of Christ, and that of the mass of the saved. The former are destined to be exalted to the divine nature. The latter, to only human perfection. Now while he is on Scriptural ground when he speaks of the special calling of the church of the first born, who suffer and reign with Christ, he fails to see that these kings and priests unto God are glorified *men*. Their human nature becomes perfected through its union with the divine nature. And so the Lord, when He gave His human nature in sacrifice for our sins, did not abandon it. He resumed it on the other side of death, and glorified it at the right hand of power. Hence St. John sees Him in glory as the Son of *Man*. (Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14). It is the Son of *Man* who shall come in glory (Matt. xxv. 31). In 1 Cor. xv., two orders of manhood are brought to view. Of these Adam and Christ are the respective heads. The Christ spoken

of is not "after the flesh," but the risen Christ. And those who are to be conformed to His image are not "spirit beings," but heavenly *men*, raised in the fashion of the heavenly manhood. This is the scriptural idea of human perfection and of complete salvation. Our author's whole idea of the age to come, with its chosen company of divine saints, who, in becoming sons of God, cease to be men, and of a vast company on the lower plane of human perfection, who can never reach this high goal of union with the divine, is throughout vitiated by this misconception. There is no salvation for men except through union with the divine. The plan of Creation and redemption culminates in the exaltation of a chosen seed to be joint heirs with Christ of our Father's vast estate. Man was made in the image of God to have this dominion. But he could worthily wear this crown only as he could win his way to it through victory over all the powers that rule or riot in it, and over death. Only God could carry the man-nature through this conflict, and on to this pinnacle of glory. This He did by coming into union with it in the person of Jesus. And in Him we are now being lifted up as the first fruits of His creatures. But first-fruits implies a later harvest. To deny, therefore, the manhood of the Christ, Head and members, is to misconceive the nature and design of the incarnation; and also the nature of that priestly work in the ages to come to which the church is called, which is to help their brother men on to the sure ground of fellowship in the eternal life of God, where they themselves stand. We may well admit that the degree and dignity of their sonship to God is peculiar. But they do

not drop out of human brotherhood. Otherwise they could not be priests. They are the princes, the first born of a family in which there are later born.

Mr. Russell, therefore, has need to revise his conception of the age to come in the light of this truth. He will then see that there is no room for his extra-scriptural view that resurrection will restore all men to the grade of human perfection in which they may be forever established, if obedient. What then is the meaning of the resurrection of judgment? And of the law of harvest, which requires that every one shall receive in body according to the things which he did? He will also see that there is but one life freed from all bondage to the creature—the eternal life—and that its crown can be won only on the arena of embodied manhood, and that resurrection restores the unjust only to another foothold on this arena, where, under circumstances doubtless favorable to success, they will have opportunity, which most of them never had in this life, to reach the high goal of human perfection through union in life with Him who is the ideal Man, the perfect image of God, crowned Lord over all.

In making this criticism we do not wish to intimate that Mr. Russell does not hold with us to the essential Christian faith concerning the person, the work and the future glory of the Christ. His error seems often to be more in definition than in essence. Nor do we wish to disparage his work. We only regret that, in his zeal to emphasize the distinction between the new manhood, which is of a divine nature, and the old natural manhood, he strips the former of its human element, forgetting that

it is by one new *man*, Head and members, that God is making peace and reconciling all things unto Himself.

We also regret to see that Mr. Russell holds to the unconscious state of all the dead before resurrection We have not space to give our reasons why we believe that this view does not take in the whole circle of Scripture teaching on this subject. Nor is it necessary, inasmuch as our views upon this point have been so often stated. There is so much, however, in the book that is far-sighted and excellent; so much that is above the range of current conceptions of the Scriptures as the Word of God, and of the great plan of grace they were written to reveal, that we heartily commend it as most profitable reading.

IS THE CHURCH BABYLON?

A correspondent writes to us:

"My idea is that God is now calling out of Babylon His elect, the body or bride of Christ. The churches, as such, are not included in this call. The unfaithful servants who delay His coming by saying that they must convert the world before His coming must, like the scribes and Pharisees, endure the punishment due (Matt. xxiv. 48). Churches, as such, never reform. The elect only have "ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand." As there were false prophets among Israel, so there are false teachers among us. And as those "prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means and my people love to have it so," so it is in our day. They still shut up the kingdom of God against themselves. They will not enter, nor allow them that would enter to do so. Consequently, they must be con-

demned. We may pity their blind condition, but how can we gain them over?"

"Babylon" is the Scripture name for that mixed condition of church and state, of things worldly and things spiritual, which has long prevailed in the world. The church of Rome is an eminent example. But not the only one. The Protestant churches have not been free from this evil. But they are not equally contaminated and enslaved by it. Many bodies of Protestant Christians have refused this bondage, and have struggled against it. It is wrong, therefore, to speak indiscriminately of the whole nominal church as Babylon. This name belongs rather to nominal Christendom, which includes all communities and states which have been brought under Christian influences. These embrace a large proportion of non-professors, as well as of worldly-minded professors. Christians in the midst of these states are banded into churches, which struggle with more or less success to lift themselves above the downward influences by which they are surrounded. Some noble efforts grace the annals of history. The Reformation period witnessed many such. In later times, we have instances like that of the Free Church of Scotland, throwing off the shackles of the State, giving up its endowments, its buildings and livings, for the sake of Christ's crown and covenant. And there is a large element of such conscientous and self-sacrificing devotion to the truth and name of Christ in many existing churches. That Babylonish elements have found their way into all these systems we plainly see. Tares are growing with the wheat. But, it would be folly, on this account, to overlook the good in them,

or to condemn them as hopelessly corrupt. The things which can be shaken must be removed that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. And those who are enlightened to perceive the evils that are wrought into these systems have a mission in this direction. They are bound to testify against what they see to be wrong, and so to seek to make them more perfect witnesses for Christ. The first disciples were not called to leave the Jewish church until their countrymen had finally rejected Christ, and driven them out with the iron hand of persecution. God's chosen witnesses in ancient times never separated themselves from their unfaithful countrymen, although raised up to testify against them.

And here we deem it right to call in question that interpretation of "Babylon," adopted by our correspondent, which assumes that the descriptions and denunciations of that corrupt system, which are summed up in Rev. xviii, all relate to the future. It is the way of apocalyptic prophecy to group together in one final picture events that may be far apart in time, which are yet closely related in character and issue. Babylon has had an existence almost contemporaneous with the Church. And in every age, false systems which Satan has artfully intruded into the Church, usurping her place and prerogatives, have had their day and been brought to nought. It is true they have been revived in other forms. We believe also that the final form of this usurpation, now developing in modern Christendom, will be the more deceptive and wide-spread than any that has preceded. There is a culminating "city of confusion," and a final, decisive crisis, at which

Babylon is stripped of her pomp and power, and thrown down with violence. Modern Christendom must be winnowed on the threshing floor of Him whose fan is in His hand. But then, He has always been purging His floor, not only by His judgments, but by raising up true and tried servants who testify to the evils that have gained lodgment in the church, and who seek to purify her from within. If the church rejects them they may be called to go out to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. But no one has a right to thus go out until he has first faithfully tried to do his duty within, and only when convinced that he can better serve his brethren by such separation. For we are sent not to condemn, but to save; and if forced to condemn, it should be in order to save.

The mistake, then, which underlies our correspondent's conception of "Babylon," lies in the fact that he does not discriminate between the great Christianized society which has grown up in the world, and the churches that exist in the midst of it, some of which, it is true, are closely identified with it. The great world-system must be shaken to pieces before the coming of the perfect order; but the churches, only so far as they are identified with it. All who belong to these churches are called to aid in separating them from the evils that defile them.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

No subject can be more important than the one so often referred to in these pages, and with no other are the minds of Christians in our day more occupied.

There is a general dissatisfaction with the old statements. Many are ready to accept the relief which the modern loose views of inspiration afford. It is safe to say that no explanation will ever be accepted by the church which either disparages the words of Scripture, or violates the intuitive convictions of spiritually enlightened men.

We are satisfied that the final solution of this dark problem will be greatly hastened when we come to understand,

1. That both Nature and Scripture certify that there is a definite and an immediate damnation from which men need to be saved.

2. That no future probation can enable them to escape it. The opportunity for escape is in this life.

3. The words of Jesus about hell and the eternal fire refer to this impending peril.

4. The judgment of the "Son of the Man" began with His exaltation as the Christ, and men are all the time being consigned to the "eternal fire."

5. This term refers to that abyss of destruction to which the devouring energy of Nature, as a form of the wrath of God, consigns this corrupt form of humanity, now cursed with sin.

6. This penalty, which is more than mere bodily death, executes the law of God against sin, fulfills the sinner's death-sentence, satisfies the divine justice, and so clears the way for the God of all grace to take up the case of lost man.

7. This He has provided for, through the ransom which secures to all a resurrection from the dead.

8. This resurrection, except in the case of a priestly class, whom God has called to fellowship with His Son in His death unto sin, and in His resurrection life and glory, is not unto eternal life but one "of judgment."

9. This "judgment" is not an aggravated repetition of a sentence before passed and executed, but an award to such lower grade of life as is required by the great harvest law, "To every seed his own body," and the necessary trial and corrective discipline pertaining to it.

10. Some may fail in this trial and suffer a second death, out of which there is no promise of a second resurrection.

PAPACY IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

The Protestant Church repudiates the Pope. It has much to say of the right of private judgment. And yet while it dismisses the Pope at the front door, it admits the Papal principle at the back door. Not content with framing its creeds out of the facts of Christianity, which no true Christian will dispute, the Reformed churches constructed systems of theology into creeds, and substituted for the rule of the Spirit, which is the only true substitute for that of the Pope, the domination of the system. Hence, in them all, there is more or less of this papacy of creed. If any one discovers some new truth out of harmony with its statements, or error inwrought at some point, he must either be silent, or run the risk of loss of standing and preferment, and, perhaps, of excision. It is amazing, when one reflects upon it, how the Protestant Church has thus abandoned the

principles of private judgment, and the liberty of the Spirit, upon which it was based. One need not go far to find churches where honest thought and high aspiration are repressed, where the gates of free inquiry are closed, and new light from the Word of God, and from other sources in Nature and Providence, is barred out. A fatal domination of creed or confession, or the intellectual domination of recognized leaders, keeps the body within the strict lines of its traditions, and puts its ban upon any who dare transcend them; unless, indeed, it be done in some such covert way as not to excite suspicion that the integrity of the system is to be endangered.

To illustrate what we mean. A member of a prominent Presbyterian church in this city remarked to as that his pastor, in conversing with him upon these themes, told him that he believed a great many things which gave him comfort which, as a Presbyterian minister, he could not preach. The admission has more than once been made to us by brethren of the highest standing, that they found relief in the belief that God's ways in redemption were not exhausted in this world, and that sinners who proved irreclaimable under them must finally suffer extinction of being. And yet none of these men would dare give public utterance to such convictions. They regard themselves as under a sort of bond not to do so. And certainly their standing in the church would be jeopardized if they did. This is what we mean by Protestant Papacy. How, we would ask, can there be honest progress in the knowledge of the truth, if honest convictions must thus be concealed? If one should have even a revelation from the Spirit upon these

mysteries, such a system would bind him not to utter it.

Protestant churches, therefore, need to reform their systems in this regard. We do not object to systematic statements of belief. But, *enforced* creeds should have respect mainly to the great facts and verities of the faith. Matters *de fide* should be carefully distinguished from matters *de opinione*. And, inasmuch as the church has not yet arrived at the unity of the faith, room should be made for all the light that God may shed upon her from time to time from any source. Especially should the church guard against the crime of quenching the Spirit in despising prophesyings. Whatever God may have to say to her through any of her spiritually enlightened servants she should be ready to hear, proving all things, and holding fast to that which is good. Above all, she should avoid forcing her ministers within such narrow lines of thought and testimony that intellectual honesty must be sacrificed, or dishonest evasions resorted to, in giving utterance to their highest and best thoughts of God and of His wondrous ways toward men.

THE NAME OF THE LORD.

The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins stated in our last number is strikingly confirmed by that impressive revelation of the Name of the Lord given in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. Moses had gone a second time to the top of Sinai, after the rebellion of the people in the matter of the golden calf, and his consequent agony of soul. He needed, himself, to know more of God. Out of the darkness of the great trial through which he was passing,

his soul cried out after God," "Now, therefore, I beseech thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee, to the end that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people" (xxxiii. 13, R. V.). . . . "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory." The Lord hides him in a cleft of the rock, and shews him, not the full glory of His face, but the reverse side of it, as was suitable to him who was the great exponent of the law. He reveals His righteousness and grace, not as antagonistic elements in His nature, but as two sides of the one essential glory. "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the name of the Lord." "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." We notice:

1. The pre-eminence of the attribute of grace. The New Testament defines God as Love. It nowhere says that "God is righteousness," although He is infinitely righteous. Love seems to be more truly the essence of His being than even righteousness. Righteousness is a form in which His love is expressed. He would not be all love unless He were all righteous. But essentially it was His *goodness* which He made to pass before Moses (vs. 19) when he proclaimed His name, saying "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." This was the great bur-

den on Moses' heart. Could Jehovah, who had just required him to slay three thousand of the people for this sin, and whose presence among them was a consuming fire, be gracious and forgive them? Hence, in His name, this was the first thing declared. "The Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

2. But His grace, although so abundant and far-reaching, cannot forgive, except as justice is satisfied by the removal of guilt. This may be by the identification with them of a righteous One who so bears their guilt as to die with and for them; as Moses here desired to do when he besought the Lord either to forgive them, or else to blot him out of His book. Or it may be after the infliction of the penalty due, that grace shall find a way to restore and heal. But in either case the sinning one must be separated from his guilt. This God can by no means clear the guilty. Even the process of his forgiveness must be a process of cleansing. And this indeed is the mystery of His salvation. Our God is a jealous God, a consuming fire. But the very fire of his anger against our sins is but the dark side of the flame of His love. He forgives the sins of men, in that He has redeemed their lives from destruction through the ransom made by One who gave Himself for all. But the life so redeemed must be cleansed and purified before it can be made eternal. And so against all that is evil in it the fire of His anger must burn. It is *our* God who is a consuming fire, and whose forgiveness is not complete until it has cleared away the sin, and destroyed the sinful na-

ture of the guilty one. It is in submitting to this process that men find salvation. But they may so harden themselves against it that they must be blotted out of God's book. Their personal being must be destroyed in the fire by which they would otherwise have been cleansed and saved.

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

"Noblesse Oblige."—Under this title a correspondent of *The Presbyterian* refers to the examination of the Rev. Eben Halley, D. D., recently installed as pastor over the Second Presbyterian Church of Troy, N. Y., as follows:

"Among the questions asked him was the following: 'If you should become convinced of any truth which is contrary to the Confession of Faith, would you preach it?' 'Oh, yes,' responded Mr. Halley, in substance, 'but I would leave the Presbyterian Church first.' The manliness and straightforwardness of this reply was greatly relished by Presbytery. For in this section of the country it is deemed unmanly and dishonorable to march under the Presbyterian banner, and occupy a Presbyterian pulpit and accept a Presbyterian salary, and yet denounce the teachings of John Calvin and hold up to ridicule the Westminster Confession of Faith."

We have to say to this, 1. The writer seems to assume that the only alternative for a man who discovers any mistake in the Confession, and who is not willing to leave the church, is to denounce and hold up its standards to ridicule Where one starts out with such an unfair statement of the case, we may well decline to accept his conclusions.

2 Dr. Halley's answer, instead of being a manly one, involves an unmanly evasion of responsibilities. As a Presbyterian minister, he is bound with all his brethren to preserve the purity of the church, and to advance it in the knowledge of the truth. If he becomes convinced that the church has fallen into error at any point, he is under sacred obligation to help to free her from the error, and especially if it is wrought into her standards. The church, in adopt-

to these standards, recognized that they were not infallible, and made provision for their possible alteration. It may be the easy course for Dr. Bailey to "leave the Presbyterian Church first," but, from our point of view, while he might refrain from introducing a disputed point into his pulpit, he is bound at any sacrifice to testify to the truth, as God may make it known to him, within the limits of the church where his present responsibility lies, and to seek to cast out any error that defiles and cripples it.

And here we make again our protest against the low notions of the church implied in all this style of remark. It assumes that the Presbyterian Church is a mere voluntary society, and not a body. A man can leave it or not, just as he can leave one political party and join another more to his liking. If the doctrine is to prevail among us that our church is merely an association of Christians, formed to defend a certain system of doctrine, then the sooner we all leave it the better. But it was never constituted, nor administered, upon any such low level. It claims to be of the body of Christ, pervaded by His Spirit, and authorized in His name to administer discipline (see chap. xxv.). If it be a body, Christ has set its members in place and appointed its officers. And if there be any back door by which any of its ministers may evade their responsibility to admonish and edify one another on the plea of not disturbing the system or of seeking larger liberty, it is not of His appointment. It is therefore a grave mistake to commend the principle involved in Dr. Bailey's answer as one of noble duty and self-sacrifice. It is the reverse of this. It is certainly supposable that the Presbyterian Church may have gone wrong at some point. We would ask how, if all its ministers are to be governed by this principle, the wrong could ever be righted?

AN UNCANNY EVASION.—It is a very common thing to hear the defenders of the old dogmas about human destiny upbraiding those who dare to call them in question, as if they were not satisfied to leave the issues of the hereafter, and all such questions where the Bible leaves them, when it asks: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Such critics ought to know that this question is a very different one from the inquiry, Are our standards right in their precise definitions of what the Judge of all the earth

intends to do? If the standards left this whole question on this ground of absolute faith in God, no one would have the right to say a word against them. But they do not. They define in precise terms that He will raise up the wicked, whose souls are in hell, and send them back to hell to be punished with unspeakable torments of soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire with the devil and his angels forever. It is a dishonest evasion of the issue to charge one who raises the question, whether these words perfectly represent the whole teaching of Scripture upon this subject, with an unwillingness to submit to its teaching, or, still worse, to impugn his motives as if he were distrustful of the righteousness of God. And the men who bring this accusation may well inquire whether this show of zeal for a principle which no one questions may not be a pretence behind which they hide from themselves and others the inconsistency of standing by doctrinal formulas which they no longer preach.

The Andover Case.—We have carefully read the statements and pleadings in this celebrated case. Prof. Smyth's defense is an able, eloquent and manly plea for that larger liberty of investigation and teaching which the case demands, and to which the Spirit of God in these days is summoning the Church. But, while he convinces us of his own uprightness, we yet fail to see that the liberty he claims was contemplated by the founders of that seminary when they framed its creed, and by those who gave their funds for its support. As this was the point at issue, the defendants confine themselves mainly to it, and do not traverse the Scripture ground upon which they base the larger hope.

This reveals to us the unwisdom of founding a church, or a theological seminary, on any such basis. The very thing that ought to come to the front in this issue is kept in the back ground. The speeches of the complainants are equally free from texts of Scripture. Neither side could fairly face the question which demands decision in the case. "Do the Scriptures give warrant for the hope that any class of mankind who die in ignorance and sin may come to the knowledge of salvation after death?" All creeds and churches, and schools of the prophets, should make room for the fair and candid discussion of such questions whenever they may

arise. For, although they may seem to have been settled once for all, something may be found out which gives a new aspect to the case. The standard of appeal should always be, behind the creed, to an open Bible. And the ever-present Spirit should be recognized and honored as given by Christ to guide His Church to right decisions—not, perhaps, complete and final. Scripture everywhere assumes that God gives His children truth "in part," and as they are able to bear it. Growth into the full unity of the faith and perfect knowledge of the Son of God was not to be immediate. But through all her history it was intended that the Church should not be dependent upon past attainments and fixed formulas of the faith, but upon an ever-present Spirit, given for the purpose of guiding her into all truth, and revealing things to come. Both sides in this Andover business are, therefore, on weak ground. The prosecutors are contending for an order of things which restricts the liberty of the Spirit; while the Professors have not yet put their feet on to the solid ground of Scripture in their views of human destiny. They see that it reveals a "hope toward God" for the heathen. But they do not give it its proper adjustment. They are misled by that favorite dogma of modern theology, that the issues of this present life will not be settled until a great day of final judgment; whereas they are summed up at death. Whether a man's soul shall be lost with the wreck of the body at that crisis, or whether it shall survive it, is determined then. Men go down to death either under condemnation, or freed from it. The account is then closed. There is no opportunity, therefore, for a prolonged probation in Sheol There may be a probation for resurrection. The "spirits in prison," to whom Christ heralded the fact of His triumph over death, may have had this hope set before them. But the death or sheol state is essentially penal. And only resurrection, in the nature of the case, can open the prison doors. After judgment is satisfied, resurrection comes, therefore, not to open up a deeper hell, but as the gracious gift of another life in manhood. Any new trial for eternal life, therefore, must come in after that. "After death, judgment." And the sinner's loss of soul in death is certain. But the recovery in due time to another life. What does this mean? What of hope does it bring? This is the point of view from which they should study this question? They would find a wealth of Scripture bearing upon it, especially when the New Testament is interpreted in the light of

the Old, which would give them firm ground to stand on,—ground upon which they can hold all the Scripture testimonies concerning the importance of this present life, the fearful danger of its loss, the punishment in hell which lies just across its borders, the inexorableness of God's law, the fixity of character, the desert of sin. But they would see also that this utter bankruptcy of the sinner's estate, which is God's penalty for sin, does not prevent Him from bestowing upon him another gift of life. And this is the very thing He has provided for in the fact that Christ, by the ransom given for all, has redeemed all. Not to eternal life. This is bestowed only upon those who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for it (Rom. ii. 7). But life restored out of the pit of death and hell into which sin casts men must, of necessity, bring its own opportunities. It does not renew the opportunity of this present life, which is lost forever, but it brings its own. Resurrection must be a boon and not a curse. In this lies the key to all these dark problems. We have seen nothing yet in the statements of the Andover professors which shows that they have found it.

A True Word.—Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe, in a letter to the *Independent* on "Church Union," says that the Bishops, in their deliberations at Chicago, "felt that Christ would never reign in this guilty land until His followers are one army under His cross and crown, and that they were willing to despise themselves, or sacrifice everything but truth to their sense of the wickedness of divisions."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

An old friend, now a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church writes:

"Your statement on page 360, that 'No fragment of the Church *can* contain or arrive at the truth in its perfectness,'' is one which I fully endorse. That sentence contains, to my mind, the key to the whole situation. And for that very reason, I am distrustful of any teaching, however plausible, that comes in conflict with what *appears* to be the Catholic faith. I say 'appears,' for I am not certain what the Catholic faith is on the subject of endless torment.

But, if it could be indisputably proved from the constant teaching of the primitive church that any one of the existing theories concerning the future of the wicked was a part of the universal faith of Christendom, I, for one, should not feel warranted in coolly ignoring that theory, merely because it did not square with my private judgment in the matter."

We agree with our brother that great deference is due to the voice of the whole church, where it speaks with one consent, and where we have reason to believe it has fairly and submissively sought light from the Holy Ghost before making its declaration. Our correspondent may well hesitate, however, to reckon the dogma of endless torment as a part of the faith of universal Christendom. It certainly was not such up to the time of Origen and the two Gregories—of Nazianzen and of Nyssa. Nor has it ever been made such by any oecumenical council which carried with it the weight of authority required by the condition our correspondent accepts, namely, that a perfect statement of truth cannot be expected from a fragmentary church. Our friend also may see another reason why one is now justified in exercising his private judgment in such a matter. Our Lord never gave to His church authority to limit the intelligence, or bind the consciences of her members for all time in such matters. The New Testament everywhere assumes that the church would make *increase* in divine knowledge until the final unity was attained (Eph..iv. 7–16). Before that goal is reached, we cannot be sure that any of her dogmatic statements are the final and perfect expression of the truth. Something may be left out. Or some new aspect of the truth may come to light, modifying our conceptions. While, therefore, on the one hand, we are to reverence the voice of the church, we are not to forget that she is not yet perfected in her sphere as God's witness on the earth.

A MEMBER of the Society of Friends encloses to us some tracts of their publication, in which it is maintained that God gives to all men, including the heathen, an inward light sufficient to save them, if they yield to it. She adds:

"Now I have read thy magazine and ask that thee will candidly examine the enclosed tracts, which have always been convincing to my mind that there need be no *straining* of Scripture to

save the heathen ; for God, himself, is their God, and will care for them, I do not like to hear any one endeavor to make out that 'eternal' and 'everlasting' mean anything but what they do. We cannot *consistently* apply them to the righteous and not to the unrighteous ; and Christ's words are so plain and revelation such a mystery, that we must take the Saviour's words to mean what He intended."

These words concisely express the difficulty which many devout minds have in admitting that there can be any hope beyond the grave for any class of men who die in their sins, and who seek relief from this harsh view in the doctrine that all men, heathen and savage, have a gospel light in their own souls, by which they may now be saved. To this we reply :

1. The Scriptures teach that the heathen do not live up to the light they have, and by it they are all condemned (Rom. iii. 9–23).

2. They teach that men must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, and ask, "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?" Even Cornelius was not saved without this faith (Acts xi. 14).

3. If it be true, then, of the heathen that God is their "God and will care for them," He must in some way take up their case on the other side of death.

4. The Scriptures were given to reveal the fact that God cannot be defeated by death in any of His plans or purposes of grace concerning man. The doctrine of redemption through resurrection runs through the Bible.

5. The single passage (Matt. xxv. 31–46), to which our correspondent refers, must be interpreted in the light of this principle. It begs the question to assert that Christ means by "eternal," absolute endlessness, and "we must take His plain words to mean what He intended." Our friend should remember that Christ did not speak these words in English. They appear in our version after passing through two translations. For St. Matthew's gospel was probably first written in Hebrew, or in Aramaic, which was the vernacular dialect of those to whom He spoke. Both as a question of philology and of exegesis, we are sent back to inquire into the Hebrew or Old Testament use of the equivalent for this word "eternal." And we find that almost invariably it defines a *relative*, and not an absolute eternity. A thing is viewed in Scripture as eternal which lasts through the whole of the existing order. It is

also an underlying Old Testament principle that redemption is effected by a judicial destruction of the old order, in order to clear the way for the introduction of a new order. Resurrection, in the Jewish conception, introduces man into a new order. It belongs *essentially* on the side of God's redemptive working. Our Saviour's words, therefore, relate to a destruction of the wicked which should be eternal in the sense that it must continue through the whole existing order of things. He could not have meant to set aside the "hope toward God," of which all the prophets had spoken, that there shall be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. Moreover, this destruction may also be viewed as endless in the sense that resurrection does not restore the old gift of life, which is forfeited forever. It confers another gift. The bankrupt who receives a new estate in life does not recover the old; whereas the righteous never become bankrupt. And so their life is eternal in the sense that it survives all changes of order, and through all "ages."

If we had all learned from childhood to properly locate the judgment-scene in Matt. xxv., as not pertaining to the risen dead, but to the living nations of mankind (see Vol. ii. WORDS OF RECONCILIATION, No. 4), we would not find it so difficult to understand how an "eternal" punishment, the essence of which is death, must necessarily be limited by resurrection which, while it can confer upon the unjust only a life which is under judgment, as is man's present life, is yet recovery from death, the wages of sin. Whether, however, our explanation is satisfactory or not, no single passage can be allowed to set aside a principle that runs through the whole Bible. Such a principle is this, that resurrection is redemptive. We say *single* passage, for this is the only passage which appears to teach distinctly everlasting punishment. The other passages relied on all take their coloring from this. Had we space, we could show also that the accurate meaning of the word *kolasis*, translated "punishment," corresponds with the view we have taken of the whole passage.